

## **"Man müsse keine Statue Equestre machen": Abildgaard and Schadow in Copenhagen 1791\***

**Patrick Kragelund**

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**Reviewers:**

Claudia Czok, Thomas Lederballe

### **Abstract**

In connection with the project of erecting an equestrian statue for King Frederick the Great of Prussia, the Berlin sculptor Johann Gottfried Schadow was in the autumn 1791 sent on a research tour to the three Baltic capitals, Stockholm, St. Petersburg and Copenhagen. Here he studied and discussed similar recent projects with fellow artists, and brought reports back to Berlin on the equestrian statues by Pierre Hubert L'Archevêque and Johan Tobias Sergel (*Gustavus Adolphus* in Stockholm), by Étienne Maurice Falconet (*Peter the Great* in St. Petersburg) and by Jacques François Joseph Saly (*Frederick V* in Copenhagen). Documents not previously published throw new light on the contacts Schadow during these travels established with the Danish painter Nicolai Abildgaard, a contact, it is here argued, that strengthened Schadow's commitment to use a historically accurate, more realistic and less idealised stylistic idiom when depicting great figures from the national past.

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### **Introduction**

[1] A hitherto unpublished letter from the German sculptor Johann Gottfried Schadow (1764-1850)<sup>1</sup> to the Danish painter Nicolai Abildgaard (1743-1809) throws new light on the friendship and shared artistic ideals of these two artists. The link between Schadow and Abildgaard was not of course unknown. In a recent series of Abildgaard exhibitions, in Paris, Hamburg and Copenhagen, the Kunsthalle in Hamburg<sup>2</sup> not only highlighted the links with his two perhaps most famous foreign pupils, Philipp Otto Runge and Caspar David Friedrich,<sup>3</sup> the exhibition also included a version of the relief produced

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\* I am grateful to the reviewers for helpful suggestions as to the structure of the paper and for saving me from some errors in my transcription of a passage in Schadow's report ([Appendix I](#)). Remaining defects are, of course, my own.

1 Götz Eckardt, *Johann Gottfried Schadow 1764-1850. Der Bildhauer*, Leipzig 1990 surveys life, oeuvre and previous bibliography.

2 Jenns E. Howoldt and Hubertus Gassner, eds., *Nicolai Abildgaard. Der Lehrer von Friedrich und Runge*, exh. cat., Hamburg 2009.

3 On Abildgaard, Runge and Friedrich, see now Markus Bertsch, "Akademische Prägungen? Zu Abildgaard-Rezeption im Werk von Asmus Jakob Carstens, Caspar David Friedrich und Philipp Otto Runge," in: Howoldt and Gassner, *Abildgaard*, 16-31.

by Schadow in 1791 as a membership piece for the Royal Danish Academy.<sup>4</sup> On presenting a cast (fig. 1) of the relief to the Academy, Schadow was on the 27th December 1791 elected as a member of that body; later he also presented a cast of his *Mars*.<sup>5</sup> According to a tradition reported by Bertel Thorvaldsen's first biographer, Just Mathias Thiele, Abildgaard had when seeing Schadow's *Bacchus and Ariadne* challenged his young pupil to produce something similar; casts of Thorvaldsen's companion pieces were, along with that of Schadow, sold in large numbers; one is still exhibited alongside Schadow's in the Academy's assembly rooms.<sup>6</sup>



1 Johann Gottfried Schadow, *Bacchus und Ariadne*, 1791, cast from original, 48,5 x 60,5 cm. Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, inv. no. KS 424 (photograph © Danish National Art Library)

[2] However, the link was by no means only of such indirect nature. During Schadow's stay in Copenhagen in late 1791, there is evidence showing that contacts

4 In a letter from Copenhagen from one "Olsen" to Schadow of 1st May 1792 in Schadow's papers in the *Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*, NL SW 170 Schadow is informed that "Gianelli" (= the Copenhagen Academy's teacher in making casts Domenico Maria Gianelli (1724-1801)), had received "votre bas-relief". Schadow who later produced two marble versions of the *Bacchus and Ariadne* (Werner Gramberg, "Ein unbekanntes Frühwerk von Johann Gottfried Schadow," in: *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen* 6 (1961), 79-84) was probably sending Gianelli a cast, from which to make copies to be sold from his shop along with the companion piece by Thorvaldsen (I owe this point to discussions with Dr. Emma Salling).

5 Dr. Emma Salling, who is publishing a *catalogue raisonné* of the art collections of the Royal Danish Academy of Art, kindly informs me that Schadow was elected by the Academy as a foreign member on the 27th December 1791 on the basis of a no longer extant petition as well as on the relief now in the Academy collection: <http://www.kulturarv.dk/kid/VisVaerkRefreshTilbage.do?vaerkId=94907>. To live up to the Academy statutes, Schadow was further requested to submit a sculpture in the round, and in 1793 sent in a (no longer extant) cast of his *Mars*.

6 Thorvaldsen's companion pieces *Hercules and Omphale* and *Numa and Egeria*: Just Mathias Thiele, *Thorvaldsens Ungdomshistorie, 1770-1804, efter den afdøde Kunstners Brevvexlinger, egenhændige Optegnelser og andre efterladte Papirer*, København 1851, 33. A letter from F.F. Friis of 8th January 1829 based upon an interview with Thorvaldsen, quotes the latter's denial that his relief was meant to challenge the work of Schadow: <http://brevarkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/breve/ea0271>.

were close and discussions lively, with strong focus on burning political and artistic issues. Adding to this, the letter from Schadow, now in the Danish Royal Library, suggests that these discussions along with what Schadow saw of Abildgaard's art, had a corroborating impact on Schadow's artistic vision, thus adding a new aspect to the links between Abildgaard and German art "Um 1800" (to quote the title of Werner Hofmann's seminal *Hamburger Kunsthalle* exhibitions from 1974 to 1979 to which the exhibition in 2009 was a belated, but welcome new addition). In what follows, discussion will first survey the evidence for contacts between the two artists and then address the documents concerning Schadow's stay in Copenhagen, looking closely at the nature and common background of what, in crucial aspects, were the shared artistic ideals of the two artists.

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### Schadow's Baltic Tour

[3] In 1822, when visiting Berlin, the young Danish art historian Niels Laurits Høyen (1798-1870) was presented to Schadow, at that time the Director of the Berlin Art Academy. Schadow had numerous Danish contacts. During their years of study in Rome, his two sons had, for instance, become close friends of the, by then, already internationally renowned Bertel Thorvaldsen.<sup>7</sup> But to Høyen's surprise, Schadow's links to Denmark reached further back. In 1791, he had visited Copenhagen and met the leading artists. As Høyen reports, Schadow "had been a close friend of our late Abildgaard and speaks of his talent and works with great respect".<sup>8</sup> In Schadow's diary there is, however, no further comment;<sup>9</sup> and Høyen never subsequently seems to have raised the issue. But his reference to Schadow's talk of Abildgaard's "talent and works" is, as we shall see, significant.

[4] The two may already have met when Abildgaard in January 1788 visited Berlin. Here the then director of the Copenhagen Academy was splendidly entertained by Schadow's patron, the influential minister F.A. von Heinitz. During Schadow's visit to

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7 In the digitized Thorvaldsen letter archive of the Thorvaldsen Museum there are three letters from Schadow to Thorvaldsen and numerous references to himself, his sons and his pupils:

[http://brevarkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/breve?q=schadow&from=&until=&sender\\_id=&sender\\_nationality\\_index=&koncipist\\_id=&document\\_status\\_id=&recipient\\_id=&recipient\\_nationality\\_index=&lang\\_id=](http://brevarkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/breve?q=schadow&from=&until=&sender_id=&sender_nationality_index=&koncipist_id=&document_status_id=&recipient_id=&recipient_nationality_index=&lang_id=).

8 Johan Ludvig Ussing, *Niels Laurits Høyens Levned* I-II, København 1872, 38; Kirsten Agerbæk, *Høyen mellem klassicisme og romantik*, Odense 1984, 129 (both with slightly doctored versions of Høyen's original); the original (= N.L. Høyen to his fiancée, 11th October 1822, Department of manuscripts, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, *Ny kgl. Samling* 2385 4°, fol. 5v.) reads "Han [i.e. Schadow] var en nøie Ven af vor afdøde Abildgaard, og taler med stor Agtelse om hans Talent og hans Arbejder" (here and in the following, all translations are mine).

9 Høyen was in Berlin roughly from 19th till 30th September 1822. In Schadow's *Schreib-Kalender auf das Gemein-Jahr 1822* (= NL SW 27, *Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*), there is no reference to a visit, but on the 16th September he is in the evening at his *Montag Club*, there meeting "H[errn] H. Steffens von Breslau". Heinrich Steffens was a great figure in early Danish Romanticism before becoming professor in Wrocław (then Breslau). It is a fair guess that the professor had arranged for Høyen to be presented to Schadow.

Copenhagen he was elected as a member of the Academy. The following year Abildgaard, probably as a polite *quid pro quo*, received similar honours from the Berlin Academy, in response entering two paintings shown at the Berlin Academy exhibition in 1793.<sup>10</sup>

[5] But whatever the date of their first meeting, there are, after 1791, further references to their acquaintance in a letter from a Danish architect and army officer, Hans Rustad to Abildgaard from July 1798 (Rustad was in Berlin to present his plans for a memorial to Frederick the Great).<sup>11</sup> From the letters, which Schadow during his Nordic travels in 1791 sent his wife, one gets a clear idea as to who most probably established the contact. Repeatedly there are greetings to Abildgaard's close friend, the engraver Johan Clemens (1749-1831), who, during those years, worked in Berlin, Clemens and his French wife Jeanne clearly having become part of the city's artists' colony.<sup>12</sup>

[6] The reason for Schadow's visit in Copenhagen was the decision to raise a memorial to King Frederick the Great in Berlin. The project, that seriously came on the agenda soon after the king's death in 1786, was for decades endlessly debated, launched and relaunched, after much turmoil finally to be brought to splendid fruition by Schadow's pupil Christian Rauch in 1851, more than half a century after it had first been suggested.

[7] In its original stages in 1790, Schadow had been the strongest candidate to obtain the commission that then, on the king's command, had envisaged an equestrian statue "in the Roman dress [...] like Marcus Aurelius, but riding on a calmly forward moving Prussian horse"; it was further stipulated that the king, returning in victory, should be crowned with laurels.<sup>13</sup> The official insistence on the Roman dress gave rise to

10 As a new Academy member, Abildgaard in 1793 exhibited "Zwei historische Skizzen. Scenen aus Nicolas Klimms Reisen vorstellend": Helmut Börsch-Supan, ed., *Die Kataloge der Berliner Akademie-Ausstellungen 1786-1850 I-III*, Berlin 1971, vol. I, 1793 nos. 70-71. Kasper Monrad "Abildgaard und die 'entartete Kunst'. Über die ungewöhnliche Provenienz zweier Gemälde," in: *Idea. Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunsthalle 2005-2007*, Hamburg 2009, 120-28 (originally published in Danish 1990) unravels the subsequent history of the two paintings, together in a Berlin private collection till 1939, when they came onto the market, one ending in the *Hamburger Kunsthalle*, HK 740, the other acquired by Statens Museum for Kunst in 1988 from the German art market (KMS 7456). For the series, see now Dorothee Gerken and Mareike Wolf, "Bilder gegen Kirche und König. Abildgaards Illustrationen zu Holbergs Roman 'Niels Klims unterirdische Reise'," in: Howoldt and Gassner, *Abildgaard*, 110-19.

11 Rustad: letter of 7th July 1798 in Nicolai Abildgaard's papers, Department of manuscripts, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, *Ny kgl. Samling* 2337 4°; for his project, see Hubertus Lossow, "Das Denkmal Friedrich des Grossen in Berlin: Ideen, Entwürfe und Ausführung," in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 5 (1936), 291-305, at 303; Rustad's projects were exhibited at the Berlin Academy exhibition in 1798 (= Börsch-Supan, *Kataloge*, vol. I, 1798, nos. 269-74) and won a prize. Jutta von Simson, *Das Berliner Denkmal für Friedrich den Grossen*, Frankfurt a. M. 1976, nos. 15a-19 reproduces Rustad's lost utopian projects.

12 Schadow to his wife 30th August 1791: "Grüss Herrn Clemens"; 27th October 1791: "Grüss doch Herrn Clemens", Julius Friedländer, ed., "Reise nach Schweden und Russland 1791," in: *Gottfried Schadow, Aufsätze und Briefe*, Stuttgart 1890, 19; 28; on their friendship, Hans Mackowsky, *Johann Gottfried Schadow: Jugend und Aufstieg 1764-1797*, Berlin 1927, 156-60.

13 "in der vorgeschriebenen römischen Kleidung [...] wie Marc Aurel, auf einem preussischen, ruhig fortschreitenden Pferde sitzend [...]", Friedrich und Kurt Eggers, *Christian Daniel Rauch*, Berlin 1887, vol. IV, 49; "mit Lorbeeren gekrönt": thus J.C. Genelli in 1791, quoting what was officially stipulated (= Börsch-Supan, *Kataloge*, vol. I, 1791, p. 62).

much public debate, many of the contributors clearly preferring that the late monarch be represented in his customary, almost iconic uniform.<sup>14</sup> Nor was Roman dress what Schadow and his powerful patron, Minister von Heinitz had wanted.<sup>15</sup> A much debated and strongly divisive aesthetic issue that contrasts the timeless, poetic and elevated with the individual and time-bound, this was, as we shall see, a debate that also had links with hotly-debated new ways of viewing society and the monarch's role in a future new order. For Schadow's artistic vision, the issue would turn out to be of lasting importance. Neither was he alone in favouring these new aesthetic ideals. In what looks like a strategically well-planned attempt eventually to sway the royal directive, it was suggested and agreed that Schadow should be sent abroad to study how the technique of casting as well as the question of style (classical or contemporary?) had been handled in similarly prestigious projects in the three Baltic capitals, Copenhagen, Stockholm and St. Petersburg.

[8] The itinerary was chosen with care. In Britain there were of course numerous such equestrian monuments (even New York could, for a brief while, boast its own George III), but few were seen to have sufficient artistic merit to merit an inspection.<sup>16</sup> From a continental perspective, as expressed by the French Pierre Patte, Britain was remarkably undemonstrative when it came to honouring its monarchs<sup>17</sup> (an attitude that of course did little to allow the genre to prosper). In France, by contrast, the Sun King's preference for this type of monument had resulted in a rare efflorescence.<sup>18</sup> As a result no other nation could offer such a wealth of prestigious examples, in the capital as well as provinces, but in 1791 revolutionary turmoil made travelling difficult. After Italy (where Schadow had already been) these circumstances left the Baltic as the obvious field of study. Here, the courts of Copenhagen and Stockholm had, within the previous three decades, invested in staggeringly costly projects, contracting with French

14 For the lively debate on this issue, see the summaries in Eggers, *Rauch*, vol. IV, 49 ff.; Hanna Hohl, "Sergel, Schadow und die Frage des Kostüms in der Denkmalsplastik," in: Werner Hofmann, ed., *Johan Tobias Sergel. Kunst um 1800*, exh. cat., Hamburg 1975, 58-71; Wolfgang Vomm, *Reiterstandbilder des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland I-II*, Diss. Köln, Bergisch Gladbach 1979, vol. I, 45-168; Jutta von Simson, "Wie man die Helden anzog – Ein Beitrag zum 'Kostumstreit' im späten 18. und beginnenden 19. Jahrhundert," in: *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 43, 2 (1989), 47-63.

15 On Schadow's and von Heinitz's attitudes, see the letter from Chodowiecki of 10th February 1792: "der König, die Mehrheit der academie und viele Aristokraten sind für das *Antique Costum*, der KronPrinz, das Publikum, der Minister Heinitz [...] Schadow und meine wenigkeit sind für den *Costum* was Fried. von Jugend auf bis an sein Ende getragen hatt": Charlotte Steinbrucker, ed., *Briefe Daniel Chodowieckis an Anton Graff*, Berlin/Leipzig 1921, 98.

16 For British equestrian monuments, see e.g. Hjalmar Friis, *Rytterstatuens Historie i Europa fra Oldtiden indtil Thorvaldsen*, København 1933, 312-33 and Volker Hunecke, *Europäische Reitermonumente. Ein Ritt durch die Geschichte Europas von Dante bis Napoleon*, Paderborn 2008, 281-83 (both with wide-ranging bibliography).

17 "Les monumens des Souverains en Angleterre ne s'exécutent pas avec l'importance que l'on remarque chez les autres nations", Pierre Patte, *Monumens érigés en France à la gloire de Louis XV, précédés d'un Tableau du progrès des arts & des sciences sous ce règne [...] suivis d'un choix des principaux projets qui ont été proposés pour placer la Statue du Roi dans les différents quartiers de Paris*, Paris 1765, 91.

18 Michel Martin, *Les monuments équestres de Louis XIV*, Paris 1986.



sculptors, whose expertise in the field for natural reasons was second to none, to erect equestrian statues of two great monarchs. Here were examples to study and experts to consult, but Schadow, with his own agenda to pursue, succeeded in adding St. Petersburg to his itinerary. It is a fair assumption that the inclusion of the equally recent and certainly no less renowned Russian project was an attempt by Schadow and his backers to rope in the support of the most outspoken adherent of a modern style, the French sculptor Étienne Maurice Falconet who famously had published his modernist views on the issue in his account of the genesis of the Petersburg monument to Peter the Great – and in the process provocatively debunked the otherwise canonical Marcus Aurelius.<sup>19</sup>

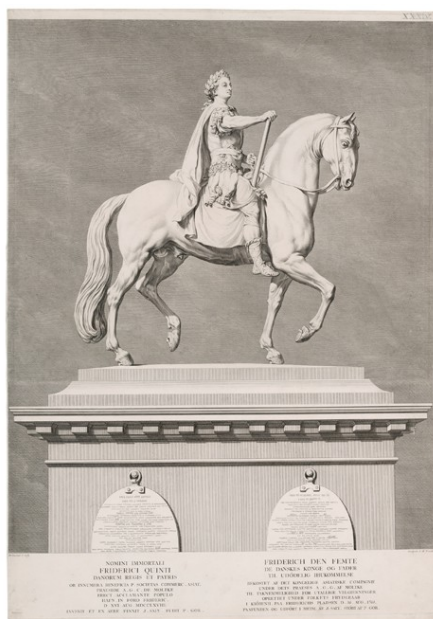
[9] With his *Quadriga* and other sculptures (1789-93) for the *Brandenburger Tor* Schadow had already documented his mastery of the classical idiom, but on the issue of style his ideals were, equally clearly, divided, his projects for statues of General von Ziethen (1790-94) as well as for Frederick the Great (1791-93) proving his talent for working in a style fusing the monumental with elements of the contemporary and realistic. For his project, a visit to Copenhagen with Jacques François Saly's equestrian statue of Frederick V (1771) would offer an opportunity to discuss the pros et cons of a project very similar to what had officially been prescribed in Berlin, the Danish King Frederick having also been portrayed in the guise of a Roman emperor, crowned with laurels (as had also been prescribed for the planned monument in Berlin); in fact, King Frederick's Danish horse is in a sense all that provides a vestige of local colour (fig. 2).

[10] Stockholm, on the other hand, could be said to represent a powerful antidote. Of course Pierre Hubert L'Archevêque's then unfinished equestrian statue (c. 1760-96) of Gustavus II Adolphus shows the great Protestant crusader crowned with the classical laurels of victory but from the shoulders down the king is shown wearing characteristic 17th century armour, cuirass, heavy iron mail and all.<sup>20</sup> In Schadow's enthusiastic comment, here there was "no foreign dress, no Roman soldier mantel" (*[k]eine fremde Tracht, kein römischer Soldatenrock*). Interestingly, L'Archevêque also chose such emphatically historical costume for his bronze monument from 1762 to Sweden's national hero and subsequent king, Gustavus Vasa (c. 1496-1560). Clearly, toga and classical nudity was in this context no option: instead, L'Archevêque drew on a 16th century portrait of almost iconic status.<sup>21</sup>

19 Falconet edited his *Oeuvres complètes* I-II, Petersburg 1779 as well as the more expansive *Oeuvres [...] contenant plusieurs écrits relatifs aux beaux arts, dont quelques-uns ont déjà paru, mais fautifs: d'autres sont nouveaux* I-VI, Lausanne 1781).

20 Johan Cederlund, *Skulptören Pierre Hubert L'Archevêque 1721-1778*, Stockholm 2003, 113-39.

21 "Keine fremde Tracht": for lack of a better alternative (cf. n. 29 and [Appendix I](#)), here and in what follows I quote Schadow's report from 1792 on his travels in the edition by Julius Friedländer, ed., "Die bronzenen Arbeiten in Stockholm und St. Petersburg betreffend," in: *Gottfried Schadow, Aufsätze und Briefe*, Stuttgart 1890, 34-38, at 33; on Vasa, see Cederlund, *L'Archevêque*, 141-51.



2 Johan Martin Preisler, Saly's equestrian statue of Frederick V at Amalienborg Palace in Copenhagen, 1770, double folio. The Royal Library, Copenhagen. Müllers Pinakothek 6, 34, fol plus (photograph © The Royal Library, Copenhagen)



3 Johann Gottfried Schadow, drawing showing Sergel's project for the statues placed on the pedestal of the statue of King Gustavus Adolphus, 1791, pen and grey wash, 48,8 x 27,2 cm, with Schadow's own annotation. Berlin, Akademie der Künste, inv. no. 779. Here reprod. from Hans Mackowsky, *Johann Gottfried Schadow: Jugend und Aufstieg 1764-1797*, Berlin 1927, pl. 61 (photograph provided by Danish National Art Library)

[11] In the late 1770's Sergel inherited the equestrian project from his old mentor. King Gustavus III now commissioned the two statues adorning the monument's pedestal (of which Schadow saw and admired the recently completed models (fig. 3)).

These statues represent the reign's great chancellor Count Oxenstierna and Clio, the Muse of History – a juxtaposition enabling Sergel's patron King Gustavus to stress the (in fact troubled and precarious) old concord between the Swedish king and nobility.



4 Tobias Sergel, original cast model for the statues of Count Oxenstierna and Clio, 1789. Stockholm, the Royal Palace (photograph © Danish National Art Library)

[12] In choice of style, Sergel responded brilliantly to his mentor's lead. During his visit in France in 1778, he had seen some of the most remarkable recent attempts – such as Augustin Pajou's *Descartes* (1777)<sup>22</sup> – to portray *les grands hommes* as they had appeared to their contemporaries.<sup>23</sup> In accordance with these new stylistic ideals, Sergel's statues for the monument's pedestal show Oxenstierna in the chancellor's official 17th century court apparel, a heavy double-waisted coat adorned with elaborate embroidery, ribbons and buttons and with knee-length breeches to match (fig. 4). Oxenstierna is dictating the account of the king's heroic deeds to a suitably classical Clio, this allegorical figure being the only main component confirming the genre's links with the classical world. Here was a project that in its fusion of historical accuracy and

22 When Sergel was elected a foreign member of the Paris Academy in January 1779 it was Pajou who at a meeting introduced him to his colleagues: Georg Göthe, *Johan Tobias Sergel*, Stockholm 1898, 121; on Pajou and Pierre d'Angiviller's *grands hommes* project, see James David Draper and Guilhem Scherf, eds., *Pajou Sculpteur du Roi 1730-1809*, exh. cat., Paris/New York 1997-1998, 299-333.

23 Ragnar Josephson, *Sergels Fantasi I-II*, Stockholm 1956, 253-62.



monumentality, the characteristic and the timeless, came close to the way Schadow no doubt wanted to proceed.

[13] Schadow's admiration for Sergel's genius was profound, but at the same time he seems to have been conscious that this was an artist who was little known outside Sweden and whose example would not necessarily carry much weight with the Berlin authorities. This may well have been one of the reasons why, at this point in his travels, he improvised by prolonging his itinerary also to include St. Petersburg, thus obtaining full documentation on the famous project, completed in 1782, that in many respects represented a new, avowedly anticlassical departure. All Europe had heard or read about Falconet's *Peter the Great*, the sculptor himself being a clever proponent of his provocative new ideas. His Czar was of course crowned with laurels but his dress was neither classical nor modern. Instead it was, Falconet had argued, timeless (like many others, Schadow misunderstood this, taking the Czar's dress to be typically Russian).<sup>24</sup> However, what stunned (and still stuns) spectators is the sheer technical bravura of it all, the Czar on the rearing horse, high upon its "natural", but at the same time symbolic and eponymous rock (fig. 5).



5 Etienne-Maurice Falconet, equestrian statue of Peter the Great, 1782, St. Petersburg. Anonymous photograph from before 1917 (photograph © Danish National Art Library)

[14] Here there was, in short, much to learn in terms of technique, but when it came to style, Stockholm was in its marked preference for the historical and characteristic at the centre of Schadow's attention. Returning to Stockholm in October 1791, he then and there penned a report to the Academy's powerful patron, Minister von

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<sup>24</sup> "Dessen Tracht ist, den Mantel abgerechnet, ganz russisch"; Friedländer, *Schadow, Aufsätze und Briefe*, 34; for Falconet's intentions and public attitudes to the Czar's dress, see Alexander M. Schenker, *The Bronze Horseman. Falconet's Monument to Peter the Great*, New Haven/London 2003, 286-88.

Heinitz, outlining what he had seen and heard up to that time.<sup>25</sup> Along with letters to his wife this report has been preserved and fully edited whereas letters illustrating what happened on the final part of his journey, during his visit to Copenhagen, have all been lost. Or so, at least, it has sometimes been claimed. Along with the letter to Abildgaard, a close look at Schadow's papers in Berlin can however throw new light on his stay in Copenhagen. As for the advice he received in Stockholm, there is, moreover, a letter from Sergel<sup>26</sup> suggesting that Schadow when going to Copenhagen was still looking for artists of great and acknowledged standing to back his own preference for the contemporary. As it shall here be argued, he found one such artist in Abildgaard – which goes a long way towards explaining why, three decades later, he would talk with such admiration of Abildgaard's "talent and works".

[15] Not that Sergel had been unsympathetic. In Schadow's report from early 1792 ([Appendix I](#)) he is even quoted as being entirely in favour. Which is where a letter, that has only recently been edited, holds a surprise, because when Schadow, apparently after his return to Berlin, wrote Sergel asking him (once again) to state his view on the matter, Sergel would, in late February 1792 (cf. [Appendix II](#)), reply that he, *as an artist*, could recommend nothing but the antique dress.<sup>27</sup> "You ask me about the statue's costume. As an artist I can but reply that the dress of antiquity is preferable to the characteristic because of its simplicity and nobility. There is no question at all which is the most handsome" (*Vous me fait une question sur le costume de la Statue. Comme artist je ne puis vous repondre que l'ancien habillement est preferable a ceu typique par la simplicité et noblesse, on ne doit pas même mettre en question le quelle est le plus beau*). Sergel agrees that the contemporary costume would please "public opinion" (*opignon publique*), but, contrary to how his attitude has often been described,<sup>28</sup> he is, as an artist, remarkably reluctant to accept the very premise of this new aesthetic: "As for me I see the matter as an artist. The most handsome costume is the one that satisfies the eye, that makes the human form most visible, without it being altered from head to

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25 Schadow's first report to von Heinitz is dated 25th October 1791; the original is in the *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, Berlin, I. HA Rep. 76 alt III nr. 381, 162-68; there is a transcription in NL SW 5, *Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*; later, this report was edited anonymously with the title "Ueber die bronzenen Arbeiten zu Stockholm und St. Petersburg," *Berlinisches Archiv der Zeit* 2 (1797), 213-23.

26 The letters from Sergel to Schadow of 31st January, 17th February, 4th May 1792, 20th August 1793 and 12th September 1796 (= NL SW 188, *Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*) are listed in Reimar F. Lacher, *Der schriftliche Nachlass Johann Gottfried Schadows. Bestandsverzeichnis* in Jürgen Grabowski, ed., *Bestandsverzeichnisse, Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* vol. III, Berlin 2006, 44, no. 188; Lisa Maria Ley, *Kunst im Zeichen der Aufklärung. Sergels Menschenbild vor dem Hintergrund philosophischer, historischer, gesellschaftspolitischer und psychologischer Ideen des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Hamburg 2007, 248; 253-54 and 280 quotes the letters of 17th February and 4th May – the remainder is inedited.

27 Lacher, *Nachlass*, 44 suggests that the Frederick in question is Frederick V of Denmark (of whom Saly's Copenhagen statue), but the Danish Frederick never went to war. Surely, Sergel is commenting on the problem of the style to adopt for the statue of Frederick the Great.

28 Göthe, *Sergel*, 203 and Hohl, *Frage des Kostüms*, 59 saw Sergel as unreservedly in favour of the modern costume. Interestingly, the issue is more complex.

feet" (*Pour moi je ne vois que comme Artist. Le plus beaux costume est celui qui satisfait l'euille, dont les formes de la nature humaine sont la plus visible, sans être alterr  par un marque depuis la t te aux pieds*).

[16] But Sergel was also a pragmatic man, who not only understood Schadow's preference for the contemporary but also admitted that if this was what was decided, it was also the most unproblematic solution since this was what men of letters would prefer. Where a classical guise would make them cry: "We are no Romans! We are Prussians!", Sergel would – *when no longer speaking as an artist* – agree that contemporary costume would truthfully show "future centuries how the Great Frederick had been dressed when he at the head of his army had overcome his enemies" (*pour les ciecles a venir, comment  tait habill  le Grand Frederick quand a la t te de son arm  il a brav  ses Ennemis*).

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### **Schadow's *Ausf hrlicher Bericht***

[17] So, when Schadow headed for Copenhagen, he may well have felt that he needed somewhat more unambiguous backing. Falconet and the Russian artists could be counted among his allies and, in his practice, so was Sergel, but, if the letter of the latter is a reliable guide (and it is hard to see why it should not be) Sergel, when it came to formulating an aesthetic policy, was by no means as wholeheartedly favourable as Schadow could have wanted. The indications are that Copenhagen offered him an artist who in theory as well as practice was fully in tune with Schadow's own inclinations. On this final leg of his journey it is true that we lack Schadow's letters – but the results and importance of his visit are by no means undocumented. At the core stand two documents, a report submitted to the Berlin Academy in early January 1792 and the letter, that Schadow in 1800 sent to Abildgaard, and that here is published for the first time.

[18] While postponing discussion of the letter to the next section, the document with which to begin is Schadow's official report to the Berlin Academy. Of this paper, there is in the *Zentralarchiv* of the *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* a transcript that Julius Friedl nder – a scholar who in this field has earned signal and well deserved renown – used as a draft when preparing his edition of Schadow's writings in 1864. Whatever one's editorial standards, this choice of preferring a later transcript to the original is of course in itself unfortunate, all the more so since Friedl nder in the process of instructing the printer how to proceed, chose to change the transcript's orthography, delete a number of passages and rephrase others. The result, which was reprinted in Friedl nder's well-known second edition of 1890 and once again in 1980 may well be more fluent, but, as we shall see, it is – for a number of reasons – far from adequate.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> G tz Eckardt, ed., *Johann Gottfried Schadow, Kunstwerke und Kunstansichten: ein Quellenwerk zur Berliner Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte zwischen 1780 und 1845* I-III, Berlin 1987, vol. II, 389 rightly characterises Friedl nder's edition as an "ausserordentlich unzuverl ssige Abdruck";

[19] What firstly matters (and what often has gone unacknowledged) is that Friedländer misunderstood the nature of the document when describing it as a draft for a lecture from 1791. In fact it postdates Schadow's return from Copenhagen in early January 1792 whence he, as has now become clear (see below), is known to have left just after New Year 1792. It is unfortunate, secondly, that Friedländer furnished the report with a title almost identical to that of Schadow's first report from October 1791: *Ueber die bronzenen Arbeiten zu Stockholm und St. Petersburg*. This misnomer obscures the fact that this second document also reports what Schadow had seen and heard in Copenhagen. As Hans Mackowsky well knew (and a consultation of the original in the Prussian *Geheimes Staatsarchiv*<sup>30</sup> confirms) this is no mere lecture, but what otherwise is referred to as Schadow's *Ausführliche Bericht*, the official "Comprehensive Report" summarising the results of his travels and his enquiries concerning the views of the leading artists of Stockholm, St. Petersburg and Copenhagen on the question of style and costume. The original, which survives in a draft and an emended transcription, is in its final version datable to between the 8th and 14th January 1792, when Schadow, immediately after his return from Copenhagen presented it to the Berlin Academy.

[20] But as we shall see, Schadow's known time schedule suggests that he wrote most, if not the entire first version of the report, while he was still in Copenhagen. Here, briefly, the core dates: Leaving Stockholm by 28th October, he would have arrived in Copenhagen by early November, where he apparently met all who counted (and more).<sup>31</sup> A lively and engaging person, with a well-developed middle class self-awareness, Schadow also partook in the city's social life, later recalling how at a ball he had seen the Crown Prince dancing with a commoner's wife. "This would indicate that a middle class attitude (*ein bürgerlicher Ton*) had spread out to all layers of society" as he with evident satisfaction commented.<sup>32</sup> The said ball was a semi-public *ballo in maschera* at the court theatre of the royal palace of Christiansborg on 14th November 1791.<sup>33</sup> In December,

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similarly Wolfgang Schöllner, "'Veredelt, aber nicht fremd': Johann Gottfried Schadow und der sogenannte Kostumstreit," in: *Georges-Bloch-Jahrbuch des kunstgeschichtlichen Seminars der Universität Zürich* 3 (1996), 171-83, at 175 n. 41.

30 Mackowsky, *Schadow: Jugend*, 279 and Eckardt, *Schadow, Kunstwerke*, 389 identify the document in the *Geheimes Staatsarchiv* as the *Ausführliche Bericht*; I owe Lacher, *Nachlass*, 2 the reference to its whereabouts.

31 In a letter from one Olsen in Copenhagen to Schadow in Berlin of 1st May 1792 there are greetings from the artists Gianelli, Høyer (whose friendship with Schadow went back to visits to Berlin in 1787-90: Torben Holck Colding, *Cornelius Høyer*, København 1961, 114-34) and one Capt. Gillberg, probably the Swedish painter Jacob Axel Gillberg (1769-1845). In addition to Harsdorff and Abildgaard he also consulted the old engraver Preisler (n. 42) and was presented to the Prime Minister Count A.P. Bernstorff and the Crown Prince: Johann Gottfried Schadow, *Kunst-Werke und Kunst-Ansichten*, Berlin 1849, 19-20.

32 "Bei einem Hofballe eröffnete dieser Herr [i.e. der KronPrinz] den Tanz mit der Frau eines Kaufmanns. Dies möge andeuten, dass ein bürgerlicher Ton sich in alle Stände eingeführt hatte", Schadow, *Kunst-Werke*, 20.

33 Schadow was on the point of leaving Stockholm 28th October 1791; tickets to the (semi-public) *Hofball* on the 14th November, to which in his memoirs he refers (n. 32), were advertised on 8th November 1791 in the *Kjøbenhavns Kongelig allene privilegerede Adresse-Contoirs Efterretninger*.

when he was elected member of the Academy, journals duly reported the honour, finally announcing on 6th January 1792 that "Mr. Schado, Prussian Court Sculptor" had left for Berlin.<sup>34</sup> The distance Copenhagen-Berlin was normally covered in four to five days, so it is a natural assumption that a well researched report, rich in allusion to classical and modern art, which at the latest had been submitted by the 14th January, had in the main been written while he was still in Copenhagen.

[21] From the report it is clear that Schadow, during this roughly two month stay, had discussed the issue of his travels with a series of Danish artists, but in his *Bericht* a central passage (Appendix I) highlights the importance of his discussions with "Abilgaard [und] Harsdorff". In the original Schadow had first included the miniature painter Cornelius Høyer in the group, but later he deleted this reference, probably because he realised that quoting Høyer might prove counterproductive. The year before, Høyer had – without succeeding in maintaining his anonymity – published a scathing review of the Berlin Academy's annual exhibition.<sup>35</sup> To enrol him as an ally would therefore hardly be helpful.

[22] Instead, Schadow focuses on Abildgaard and Harsdorff and distinguishes between four views, first numbering the artists (i) favouring a Roman costume, then (ii) moving on to those who saw no obstacle to the modern costume. It is here he not only lists his Russian colleagues, but – perhaps somewhat misleadingly – also Sergel whose letter (Appendix II) suggests that his practice was far more unambiguously in favour than were his own aesthetic attitudes. In any case, Schadow rounds off this section quoting a Swedish example (left out by Friedländer). There was, he argues, no way that one could depict the warrior king Charles XII in anything but his historical costume. Here, the Roman style would "cause offence" (*choquieren*).

[23] With a new paragraph (an emphasis not acknowledged by Friedländer) Schadow then turns to the third and fourth point of view, as argued by "Abilgaard [und] Harsdorff in Copenhagen". Their basic view was, simply put, "that one should make no equestrian statue". Coming from the Danish king's first painter and first architect, this is a statement that should arouse scholarly curiosity. After all, the very foundation of the Copenhagen Academy had been intimately linked to the project of erecting precisely such a statue, the project having been part of a large scale commemoration of the tercentenary of the ruling dynasty as well as the hundredth anniversary of the

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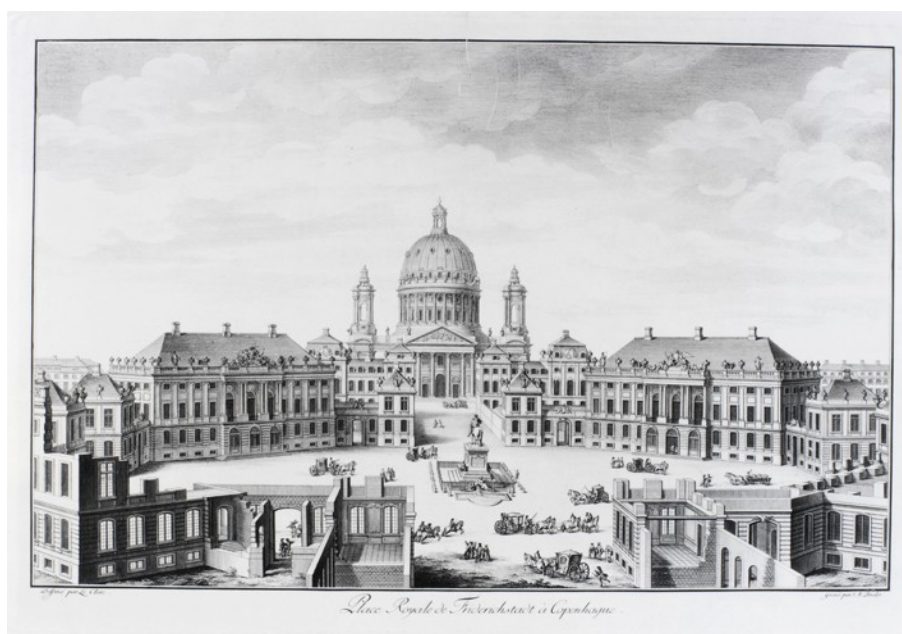
34 Appointment mentioned in *Kjøbenhavnske Tidender*, 30th December 1791; similarly, *Kjøbenhavns Kongelig allene privilegerede Adresse-Contoirs Efterretninger* 2 January 1792: "Nyheder: Hr. Schado, kongl. Preussisk første Billedhugger samt Rector og Professor ved Konsternes Academie i Berlin er medens hans Ophold her optaget til Medlem af det Kongelige Maler, Billedhugger- og Bygningsacademie"; further, on 6th January, under "Reysende: Udv. Preussisk Hofbilledhugger Schado til Berlin" (during this period Schadow often spelt his name Schado – as it is indeed pronounced).

35 [anon.], *Observations critiques sur l'exposition à l'Academie de Beaux-Arts à Berlin en 1789*, s.l. 1790; the review caused a stir: Holck-Colding, Høyer, 118.



introduction of absolutism. As a companion and parallel to Abraham César Lamoureux's equestrian statue from 1687 of Christian V, the first of Denmark's absolutist kings, that of Saly portraying that monarch's great grandson had in 1771 become the centrepiece of the new royal square of Amalienborg, situated in the far-flung New City named after the royal hero (fig. 6).

[24] Riding high on its pedestal, framed by an architectural octagon consisting of four new aristocratic residences and facing the church vowed to celebrate three centuries of divine benevolence, this was a statue and setting that gave graphic expression to the centralist ideals of absolutism – but this, said Abildgaard and Harsdorff, was no longer the kind of monument they would endorse. And, what is more, this was in fact a view that Schadow (in yet another passage omitted by Friedländer) had heard many people advocate.



6 Johan Martin Preisler (after drawing by L.A. Le Clerck), The royal square of Amalienborg with Saly's equestrian statue of Frederick V and Nicholas-Henri Jardin's project for Frederick's Church, 1766, Folio (photograph provided by Danish National Art Library)

[25] Given the timing such sentiments need not surprise. In 1791, the French Revolution was still in its early, relatively peaceful and certainly Pre-Terror stage. Throughout Europe fears and opposition were of course voiced, but the predominant reaction was one of enthusiasm and applause for what was widely seen as a new dawn of equality and freedom. These were clearly sentiments shared (if more or less wholeheartedly) by some of the Nordic artists Schadow had encountered, Sergel for instance sending him greetings of "viva Bac[c]o et surtout la cara Libertà", defining the latter as "ma divinité favourite La Liberté".<sup>36</sup> During his travels, Schadow himself is in his

36 Letter from Sergel to Schadow of 31st January 1792 (NL SW 188 *Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*), "viva Bac[c]o et surtout la cara libertà" and "ma divinité favourite La Liberté".

private letters repeatedly voicing impatience with aristocratic arrogance,<sup>37</sup> years later still expressing his admiration for the strong bourgeois sentiment of Copenhagen society. What matters here, however, is the attitude of his Copenhagen hosts. Of Harsdorff's views there is no evidence, but it is now recognised that Abildgaard was an enthusiastic supporter of the political ideals of the French Revolution, and that this, moreover, was an attitude that already by the time of Schadow's visit had landed the court painter in deep trouble. When Abildgaard suggested celebrating the reform policy of the Crown Prince's government in a painting for the Great Hall of the royal palace, the court had in late 1789 backed down, refusing to let him employ an iconography of liberty. This veto apparently led to conflict; in any case, when Abildgaard had completed the said painting he was, in early 1791, sacked and the project on which he had worked since 1778 brought to a halt.

[26] In bold response, Abildgaard, later that spring, appealed for public support to erect a Liberty Column, complete with French inspired symbols of *liberté* and *égalité*. In a capital where enthusiasm was running high both for the domestic reform policy and for what had begun happening in France, the Liberty Column initiative that had its most notable artistic spokesman in Abildgaard met with unprecedented support. In Denmark, the project constitutes a watershed in public attitudes. From public art being an almost exclusively royal domain, for the subjects to finance and humbly admire, the Liberty Column (1792-97) represents the moment when the Danish third estate for the first time began arrogating for itself a say in such matters.<sup>38</sup> It is against this rapidly shifting political background that one should see Abildgaard's high-handed rejection of the genre that more than any other epitomises the status of absolutist monarchs. This was now, as he saw it, becoming a thing of the past.

[27] In Schadow's report, however, the following paragraph brings in a sobering note of realism. Such decisions were of course neither Abildgaard's nor Schadow's to make. So if the project was already decided, it was his hosts' advice consistently to adopt the less elevated style of "portrait through and through" (*ganz Portrait*), giving the sitter a "noble, but not alien aspect" (*veredelt aber nicht fremd*).

[28] This was a suggestion that clearly appealed to Schadow's own artistic vision. In support his report repeatedly returns to the bland anonymity of the classicising idiom. Quoting from Saly's writings<sup>39</sup> (of which Schadow made a manuscript copy, presumably

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37 Letter from Schadow to his wife 30th August 1791: "Mit all' der Artigkeit, die meine Reisegefährten gegen mich affectierten, konnten sie doch ihr hochadeliges Wesen nicht ganz ablegen. Capitain Pollett [...] ist ein Erzaristokrat [...] der andere war [...] peggio che il primo", Julius Friedländer, ed., "Reise nach Schweden und Russland 1791" in: Friedländer, *Schadow, Aufsätze und Briefe*, 17; similarly, in October 1791 on the "knickerichten Stolz unser preussischen Grossen" (ibid., 25).

38 Patrick Kragelund, *Abildgaard, kunstneren mellem oprørerne*, København 1999, 360-88; on the column's significance Karin Kryger, *Frihedsstøtten*, Odense 1988; Jens Engberg, *Magten og kulturen. Dansk kulturpolitik 1750-1900*, vol. I-III, København 2005, vol. I, 382-86.

39 Saly published two reports on his statue: Jacques François Joseph Saly, *Description de la statue équestre que la Compagnie des Indes Orientales de Dannemarc a consacrée à la gloire de Frédéric V*,

while in Copenhagen)<sup>40</sup> he argues that while that sculptor had aimed at what he himself called "a kind of deification" (*einer Art von Vergötterung*),<sup>41</sup> he had in fact deprived the subject of all individuality, making his king look exactly like any other. To prove this latter point, Schadow proceeds to quote an anecdote (on which, in fact, he elaborates from his first to his second manuscript version). As the old Danish master engraver J.M. Preisler (1715-94) had told Schadow, his official engraving (fig. 2) showing Saly's Frederick V had, in Paris, mistakenly been assumed to represent the King of France, Louis XV.<sup>42</sup> Such timeless anonymity was not what Schadow wanted for his project – and in his search for alternative models, it is now time to look closer at the evidence from his letter to Abildgaard.

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### Schadow's letter

[29] The letter ([Appendix III](#)) illustrates what probably strengthened his resolve to consider a portrait the proper stylistic approach for his proposed monument. It shows that Schadow, during his visit, had been taken to see Abildgaard's paintings at the royal palace of Christiansborg. From 1778 till he was sacked in 1791 Abildgaard worked on the initial part of this grand project involving ten paintings and ten grisailles illustrating the history of Denmark under the Oldenburg dynasty. What Schadow saw in late 1791 was in short all that was completed (save three paintings all was lost in the palace fire three years later). The series had clearly left Schadow impressed. He praises its quality and offers his condolences (which of course was all as it should be), but it is when, in his letter, he returns to the issue of their discussions back in 1791 that he suddenly becomes specific, making it clear what he had particularly admired.

[30] Happily for Schadow, the new King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm III (1797-1840), "felt bored by always having to see some Greeks and Romans" (*s'ennuit à voir toujours des Grecs et des Romains*). What he wanted was national history<sup>43</sup> – a circumstance which now brings Schadow back to the subject of Abildgaard's lost paintings. In itself a valuable eye witness report, it adds of course to the value of Schadow's comment that it comes, not from a mere admirer, but from an artist

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København 1771 and Jacques François Joseph Saly, *Suite de la description du monument consacré à Frédéric V par la compagnie des Indes de Dannemarc*, København 1773.

40 Schadow's lost transcription (= NL SW 229, *Verlust, Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*) of Saly's *Suite de la description* (n. 39) is listed in Lacher, *Nachlass*, 81, no. 229.

41 "Sie glaubten, wie Saly selbst gesteht, ihren Helden in einer Art von Vergötterung zeigen zu müssen", Friedländer, *Schadow, Aufsätze und Briefe*, 32. Schadow quotes from the final paragraphs of Saly's *Suite de la description* (n. 39 and 40), "que le héros, don't la consecration de la statue est une espèce d'apothéose, fut en quelque sorte déifié par un air de dignité, délibération & de bonté".

42 "So erzählt der alte Preisler, dass sein Kupferstick von der Kopenhagener Statue Friedrich's des V. zu Paris als die Ludwig's des XV. verkauft worden sei", Friedländer, *Schadow, Aufsätze und Briefe*, 33.

43 Claudia Czok, *Schadow, Sokrates und das Judentum. Johann Gottfried Schadow, "Sokrates im Kerker"*, Berlin 2003, 35 quotes the royal directive from 1799 concerning patriotic art.

appreciating solutions to problems that he himself was facing. In a world of widespread enthusiasm for all things classical, Schadow's determination to hold on to a stylistic idiom aimed at capturing the individual and characteristic continued to be criticised. This had also been the case with the statue of Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau that he had just finished. Some years earlier, when presenting its model, Schadow had told the Queen of Prussia, "Against Prussian costume in sculpture many cry out in protest, above all poets and artists",<sup>44</sup> a statement verified when this same monument in the autumn 1800 triggered Goethe's virulent attack on what he saw as the "prosaic spirit of the age" (*prosaische Zeitgeist*) so characteristic of the Berlin artists – and above all of Schadow. In his attack Goethe would sternly warn against what he saw as an artistic trend threatening to let "Poetry be supplanted by History, Character and the Ideal by Portrait [...], General Humanity by the Patriotic" (*Poesie wird durch Geschichte, Charakter und Ideal durch Porträt [...] das allgemein Menschliche durchs Vaterländische verdrängt*).<sup>45</sup> Ultimately drawing upon Aristotle's famous distinction in the *Poetics* between the timeless, more philosophical realm of poetry as opposed to the realm of history dominated by the time bound and purely accidental, the debate between Goethe and Schadow reflects what Werner Hofmann has rightly characterised as an unresolved dilemma of late eighteenth century aesthetics.<sup>46</sup>

[31] When looking for his own artistic solutions to this dilemma it seems clear that on his Nordic travels, Schadow received vital stimuli, from Falconet, from Sergel and, it now emerges, also from Abildgaard, who not only in practice had demonstrated his familiarity with the aesthetic issues involved, but who in an essay published in 1786 quotes and often agrees with Falconet's criticism of tendencies blindly to exaggerate the quality of ancient art.<sup>47</sup> It is against this background one should see Schadow's desire (Appendix III)

that our painters could have seen your paintings in the Great Hall (i.e. of the Copenhagen royal palace) that proved so well that one can be at least as interesting by using the costume of the modern ages as by using that of antiquity.

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44 "wider das preussische Costüm in der Sculptur schreit doch mancher, und besonders Dichter und Künstler", Julius Friedländer, ed., "Gespräch des Königs Friedrich Wilhelm III. mit Schadow über das Denkmal des Fürsten Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau 1798," in: Friedländer, *Schadow, Aufsätze und Briefe*, 39-43, at 42.

45 Goethe is here quoted from Martin H. Schmidt, *"Ich machte mir: eine Büste von Goethe". Schadows Widerstreit mit Goethe*, Frankfurt 1995, 17 (with bibliography).

46 Goethe ultimately paraphrases Aristotle, *Poetics* 9.3; on the aesthetic and ideological implications of the debate, see the contributions quoted in n. 14 and n. 51 and the discussions of Werner Hofmann, "Rollentauch, oder: 'Wer allgemein sein will, wird nichts ...'," in: Werner Hofmann, ed., *Johan Tobias Sergel. Kunst um 1800*, exh. cat., Hamburg 1975, 9-25; Schöller, "Veredelt, aber nicht fremd," 171-83 and Andreas Beyer, "Das Blücher-Denkmal in Rostock," in: Uwe Fleckner et al. (eds.), *Jenseits der Grenzen*, Köln 2000, 70-86.

47 In the pamphlet, Nicolai Abildgaard, *Nogle Anmærkninger ved det i Aar udkomne Skrift under Titel: Udførlig Revision [...] ved Andreas Christian Hviid*, København 1786, 42; 51-52 Abildgaard approvingly quotes Falconet's warning against taking the praise of ancient art found in ancient authors at face value, but is at 77-78 highly disapproving of Falconet's criticism of the *Marcus Aurelius* (which he stresses that Falconet had himself never seen).

It (i.e. the modern costume) is closer to and more in harmony with our manners, but it gives perhaps greater problems in treating than the other.

*(Je souhaiterais que nos peintres eussent vu vos tableaux de la grande Salle, qui prouvaient bien que l'on peut être avec le costume des temps modernes au moins aussi intéressant, qu'avec l'ancien. Il est plus voisin et plus conforme à nos mœurs, mais il donne peut-être plus d'embarras à le traiter que l'autre.)*

[32] A pioneer in illustrating such "sublime" poets as Ossian<sup>48</sup> and Shakespeare, Abildgaard is at the same time a painter, who drew much inspiration from antiquity, from its poets, history and drama as well as from its art. However, Schadow's letter re-evokes aspects of Abildgaard's art that in his own day were at least equally renowned. Sketches and contemporary reports confirm that the lost paintings for the royal palace represented a boldly conceived foray into a new realist style in depicting the national past. Adorning the lower section of three walls of a total length of eighty meters (20 + 40 + 20), the shorter initial and final sections on each of the hall's two short walls were both allegorical, one dealing with the remote past, the other with the glorious present. In these sections Abildgaard had held on to the traditional style and vocabulary of official history painting, a choice markedly contrasted by his adoption of a new, realist style for the long central section with all the kings from the late 16th century till the early 18th. Here, there were no classical personifications, no divine light from above and no angels heralding celestial benevolence. Even in the series' two central panels with indoor scenes illustrating the crucial transition from elective to absolutist monarchy, the style was demonstratively realistic, with portraits, historical records and the study of original locations providing the basis on which the painter recreated a historically "correct" setting for the events depicted (fig. 7a-b).<sup>49</sup> This was a choice that by no means had appealed to all, a well-informed, high-ranking foreign visitor for instance criticising this choice of stylistic idiom for reducing the paintings' protagonists to the level of "madmen", "burghers" and "corporals".<sup>50</sup> For others it was, however, this modern section that held the strongest appeal,<sup>51</sup> another foreign visitor<sup>52</sup> comparing the result with the works of the leading exponent of a modern, realist style, the American history painter Benjamin

48 Abildgaard's pioneering role in illustrating Ossian: M. Macdonald, "Ossian and Art: Scotland into Europe via Rome," in: Howard Gaskill (ed.), *The Reception of Ossian in Europe*, London 2004, 397-99 (with bibliography); for his illustrations of Shakespeare, see Patrick Kragelund, "Abildgaard, Füssli and the First Shakespeare Paintings outside Britain," in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 73 (2010), 237-54.

49 Erik Fischer, "Abildgaards kongebilleder i Christiansborgs Riddersal," *Kunstmuseets Årsskrift* 1992, 4-39; Kragelund, Abildgaard, 225-302; 360-76; Thomas Lederballe, "The body of power" in: *Nicolai Abildgaard. Revolution embodied*, exh. cat. Statens Museum for Kunst, København 2009, 39-67.

50 Francisco de Miranda, *Colombeia* vol. VI, Caracas 1983, 227-28 (reporting his impression of the paintings in his diary the 30th January 1788) claims that the wounded King Christian IV looked "more like a hectic madman [...] than a hero" (*más parece un loco frenético [...] que un héroe*), the Swedish general Steenbock *un caporal* and, in another hall of the castle, he took exception to an official portrait of Frederick the Great of Prussia: "with his blue officer's coat [...] he looked like a commoner" (*con su frac azul [...] parece un burgués*); during his Copenhagen visit Miranda was reading Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, his enthusiastic comments documenting his preference for the neoclassical aesthetics.



West (1738-1820).<sup>53</sup> It was no doubt also this latter aspect that had appealed to Schadow. He, too, moved in circles that took a strong interest in the new developments in British history painting. Hence his admiration for paintings confirming "*que l'on peut etre avec le costume des temps modernes au moins aussi intéressant, qu'avec l'ancien*".



7 a / b Nicolai Abildgaard, *King Frederick III receives the representatives of the Danish Estates who recognize the introduction of absolutism* (1660) and *King Christian V issues the Danish Common Law* (1683), 1783 and 1784, oil on canvas, 61 x 37 cm (sketches for the lost paintings in the Great Hall of the royal palace of Christiansborg). Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, KMS 1139e and f (photograph © Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen)

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51 For contemporary verdicts on these paintings, see the survey in Kragelund, *Abildgaard*, 280-98; 332-35; also in Denmark, the preference for the contemporary rather than the classical was widespread: as a reviewer remarked, it made no sense to let "men with whom we have lived be portrayed in marble or in prints as if they had lived two thousand years ago" (*Mænd, som vi have levet med, staae og sidde derhen i Marmor og Kobber, som havde de levet for 2000 Aar siden*): [anon.], *Almindelig Dansk Literatur-Journal* 3 (1781-82), 403.

52 In a letter from February 1786, [I.F. Henry] Drevon, *Voyage en Suède*, Haag 1789, 270-71 compares Abildgaard with Louis XV's late-baroque history painter Jean-Baptiste-Marie Pierre (1713-89) as well as with Benjamin West: "Les Danois ont un Peintre d'histoire\*", dont la composition peut être mise en parallèle avec celle d'un West ou d'un Pierre. La Cour lui donne une pension annuelle de 1000 écus, pour lequel il s'est engagé à livrer toutes les années, au jour de naissance du Roi, un tableau, représentant quelque époque mémorable de l'histoire de Dannemarc. Il en peindra 22, à mesure que ces tableaux sont achevés on les place dans la superbe salle des Chevaliers [...]. \*Le Professeur Abelgaard". The account of Drevon was also edited in English (London 1790; Dublin 1790). The abridged German version (Nürnberg 1790) omits the passage quoted above. The comparison reflects Abildgaard's stylistic range, reaching from late-Baroque allegory to modern "realism": Kragelund, *Abildgaard*, 280-90.

53 For the wide-ranging impact of Benjamin West's *Death of General Wolfe*, see H. von Erffa and A. Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*, London 1986, 62-3 (with bibliography); Reimar F. Lacher, *Schadows Prinzessinnengruppe. Die schöne Natur*, Berlin 2007, 48-50 rightly stresses Schadow's links with contemporary English portrait painting.

### **Frederick the Great in Copenhagen and Sokrates in Berlin**

[33] For both artists the visit seems to have been an inspiration. From Abildgaard there is no direct comment, but a drawing that not previously has been discussed in this context may well be the product of their meetings and discussions. In Abildgaard's *oeuvre*, this drawing, with its realistic style and near-contemporary motif is – apart from the Christiansborg paintings – almost unique. It represents an encounter between Frederick the Great and the French statesman, Count Mirabeau, the latter handing the king a document entitled *Droits de l'homme* (Fig. 8).



8 Nicolai Abildgaard, *Mirabeau presenting the "Droits de l'homme" to King Frederick the Great*, ca. 1789-93, pen, pencil and sepia, 12,5 x 15,9 cm, inscribed "Mirabeau et F2do". Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Department of Prints and Drawings inv. no. KKSgb 3730 (photograph © Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen)

[34] The drawing's rendering of the king's profile and trademark uniform calls to mind the kind of modern history painting in the style of Benjamin West for which the Berlin history painters during this period received numerous royal commissions and from which Abildgaard's friend, Johan Clemens had been summoned to Berlin to produce a large scale engraving for the patriotic market.<sup>54</sup> The crucial difference between these works and that of Abildgaard is of course that for all the realism, for all the emphasis on the time bound and particular, the very situation with Mirabeau presenting the king (who

<sup>54</sup> For the impact of Benjamin West on the Berlin art scene of the 1780s, see Schadow, *Kunst-Werke*, v, "In der selben Zeit entstand das kostbare Blatt 'General Wolfes Tod' nach Benjamin West [...] Ein gleiches zu leisten für die preussische Geschichte waren Cunningham und Clemens nach Berlin gekommen". J.F. Clemens was called to Berlin in 1788 to produce his folio engraving after Edmund Francis Cunningham's painting, *Friedrich II bei der Rückkehr vom Manöver in Potsdam* (1787): Leo Swane, *J.F. Clemens. Biografi samt Fortegnelse over hans Kobberstik*, København 1929, no. 262.

died in 1786) the declaration on the Rights of Man from 1789 is an utterly unhistorical, poetic fiction that in symbolic manner brings together a leading exponent of enlightened despotism (whom Abildgaard had admired and whose writings he had studied)<sup>55</sup> with one of the leading figures of the early French Revolution. Around the king, soldiers are sleeping, but the encounter is witnessed with interest by a suddenly awakened young man in the drawing's background.<sup>56</sup> Clearly, this is the "dawn of a new day".

[35] The drawing reflects Abildgaard's deep interest, personally as well as artistically, in the developments in France.<sup>57</sup> The autograph catalogue of his library<sup>58</sup> illustrates how he between the summer 1789 and early 1793 bought numerous works on the Revolution and its new model for society, among these the discussions of the Declaration of the Rights of Man by Thomas Paine and Edmund Burke; his acquisitions from these years also reveal his interest in the writings of the great Mirabeau, his letters as well as his speeches.<sup>59</sup>

[36] The drawing seems roughly datable to between 1789 and 1793 when Mirabeau (who died in early 1791) was accused of having been the monarchy's secret agent, thus losing his status as a revolutionary icon; on its verso are drafts related to the project of the Column of Liberty (early 1791-early 1792), so a date during that period seems plausible. Given the evidence for Abildgaard's discussions with Schadow a new perspective seems worth considering. The drawing's almost unique experiment (in this *oeuvre*, that is) in combining the historic and near contemporary with the poetic and symbolic may well be a close echo of the very issues and dilemmas which had been central to his discussions with Schadow.

[37] As for Schadow there is likewise a possible and hitherto unacknowledged link to consider. In his letter there is, sadly, no reference to the work in question. Instead it offers some brief, and interesting comments on what he had himself recently produced,

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55 Abildgaard acquired the following works by Frederick the Great between 1789-93: *Oeuvres posthumes* I-XV, Berlin 1788; *Supplément aux Oeuvres posthumes [...] pour servir de suite à l'édition de Berlin. Contenant plusieurs pièces qu'on attribue à cet illustre auteur* I-VI, Köln 1789 and *Oeuvres [...] publiées du vivant de l'auteur* I-IV, Berlin 1789. He further had biographies on the king by Carlo Denina, by J.-A.-H. de Guibert and by Voltaire. Thomas Lederballe in: Howoldt and Gassner, *Abildgaard*, 138-39, no. 33 comments interestingly on Abildgaard's annotation of the king's *Anti-Machiavel*.

56 For the drawing, see Kragelund, *Abildgaard*, 87-88 and, above all, Thomas Lederballe in: Howoldt and Gassner, *Abildgaard*, 138-39, no. 33; the latter rightly points to contemporary descriptions of similar fictive meetings in Elysium of the king and Mirabeau.

57 On the French Revolution and Abildgaard's artistic vision, see Kragelund, *Abildgaard*, 82-91; 360-472 and Thomas Lederballe "The political artist 1785 – c. 1800," in: *Nicolai Abildgaard. Revolution embodied*, 94-121.

58 For the painter's library catalogues and books (many of which since 1810 in the Danish National Art Library) and their importance for understanding Abildgaard's *oeuvre*, see Kragelund, *Abildgaard*, 9-120; on their evidence for his interest in the events in France after 1789, see 82-91.

59 Abildgaard acquired the following works by Mirabeau between 1789-93: first the anonymous *Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin* I-II (Paris 1789), then *Mirabeau peint par lui-même, ou Recueil des Discours qu'il a prononcés, des Motions qu'il a faites* I-IV (Paris 1791) and finally *Lettres originales* I-IV (Paris 1792, an 3 de la liberté).

most notably the so-called *Prinzessinnengruppe* portraying Queen Louise and her sister. Interestingly, he here expresses his undisguised regret that what at the Academy exhibition of 1797 had been greeted as a masterpiece and is today perhaps his single best known work, in fact was "hidden away" (*caché*) – its undisguised erotic appeal probably being one of the reasons why the new king preferred to keep it out of public sight.<sup>60</sup> The criticism of his statue of Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau (fig. 9), whom he indeed portrayed as "an old Prussian general [...] of the last century and still sporting a moustache" (*un vieux General prussien, [...] du siècle passé, qui porte encore la moustache*) was at the time of writing still to come, but what matters here is the work that he completed that summer as an entry for the Academy exhibition opening 15th September 1800.



9 Johann Gottfried Schadow, *Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau*, 1798-1800, Bronze, 62 x 17,5 cm.  
Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. no. B I  
244 (photograph © b p k Bildagentur für Kunst,  
Kultur und Geschichte)

<sup>60</sup> For the enthusiastic reception and troubled 19th century history of the group, see Lacher, *Prinzessinnengruppe*, 116-19 (with extensive bibliography).





10 Johann Gottfried Schadow, *Sokrates im Kerker*, 1800, pen and brown ink, brown and blue wash, watercolour and white hightening over pencil and black chalk, 52,9 x 71,3 cm. Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. no. SZ Schadow 2 (photograph © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

[38] Schadow's *Sokrates im Kerker*<sup>61</sup> is a large scale sepia composition showing the famous scene in the prison of Athens with Socrates bidding his friends farewell (fig. 10). Among the pupils, Schadow has, remarkably, portrayed Berlin's perhaps most outstanding Enlightenment philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, thereby affirming a close link between Socrates and his German-Jewish follower. In the present context it is, moreover, notable that the drawing discreetly seems to allude to a painting by Abildgaard that by different means but with similar emphasis creates a link between Socrates and the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Of this work, Schadow doubtless knew the engraving by Clemens that the latter in 1787 had put on show at the Berlin Academy exhibition (fig. 11).<sup>62</sup> The entry had clearly made an impression. The engraver Daniel Chodowiecki (1726-1801) who described his young colleague as "truly one of the ablest German engravers of this age", singled it out as among the finest works of that year, later listing it among the works by Clemens that brought him "much honour".<sup>63</sup>

61 For the drawings, see now Czok, *Schadow, Sokrates und das Judentum*; S. Badstübner-Gröger, Claudia Czok and Jutta von Simson, eds., *Johann Gottfried Schadow: die Zeichnungen I-III*, Berlin 2006, vol. I, nos. 583-97 lists all relevant drawings.

62 Börsch-Supan, *Kataloge*, vol. I, 1787, no. 231b.

63 Steinbrucker, *Briefe Chodowieckis an Graff*, 52 (25th June 1787): "Sie haben recht zu glauben das unter der Anzahl Bilder die unser Ausstellung enthalten hatt ... allerley ist. Die Besten sind [...]" (then enumerating some thirty out of 395, among them Clemens and Abildgaard's *Socrates*, no. 231b). Charlotte Steinbrucker, ed., *Briefe Daniel Chodowieckis an die Gräfin Christiane von Solms-Laubach* (= Studien zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte 250), Strassburg 1928, 174: "Socrates und Ossian nach Abilgaart [...] machen ihm (sc. Clemens) viel Ehre"; 173: "wahrlich einer der geschicktesten deutschen Kupferste[che]r dieser Zeit" (both statements from c. 1791).





11 Johan Frederik Clemens (after Abildgaard), *Socrates*, 1786. The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Müllers Pinakotek 23,3 folio (photograph © The Royal Library, Copenhagen)



12 Johann Gottfried Schadow, *Socrates im Kerker* (detail of fig. 10).

[39] A small, but significant detail reveals that Schadow remembered his colleagues' Socrates, be it that he owned it himself or knew it from visits to Clemens. In the background just next to Socrates, two objects provide historical colour to the setting: a book scroll and a Greek vase (fig. 12). The book scroll carries an inscribed reference to Aesop, some of whose fables Socrates worked on versifying during his final hours.<sup>64</sup> The vase is adorned with a winged genius sometimes described as a genius of death.<sup>65</sup> But

64 Plato *Phaidon* 60c; 61b.

65 "geflügelter Genius": Czok, *Schadow, Sokrates und das Judentum*, 14; "ein Todesengel": Czok in Badstübner-Gröger et al., *Schadow: die Zeichnungen*, vol. I, no. 598.

the genius of death does not usually fly. In his allegory celebrating Socrates' "inner voice" as a symbol of the freedom of man's conscience, this was however, precisely how Abildgaard had depicted Socrates' daemon.<sup>66</sup> When Schadow, despite the king's orders for national history, chose to adopt a motif from classical antiquity, it looks, in short, as if he has taken a close look at the way an artist, whose "talent and works" he admired (above § 3), had handled the problem of giving visual expression to this central tenet of Socrates' philosophy.

[40] Classical antiquity and *les temps modernes*: throughout their careers, both artists were drawn to both areas, and both had thought deeply about the aesthetic and ideological dilemmas and implications in using these idioms. Hence, I suggest, the memorable intensity of their meeting in late 1791.

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66 For the links between Abildgaard's *Socrates* and enlightenment philosophy, see Patrick Kragelund, "The Church, the Revolution and the *Peintre Philosophe*," in: *Hafnia* 9 (1983), 25-65; Kragelund, *Abildgaard*, 324-28.

## Appendix I

Excerpt from Johann Gottfried Schadow's so-called *Ausführlicher Bericht* on his travels to Stockholm, St. Petersburg and Copenhagen presented to the Berlin Academy between 8th and 14th January 1792

From his travels to the Nordic capitals, Schadow sent two reports back to Berlin. The first is addressed to von Heinitz and dated 25th October 1791; the original is in the *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, Berlin, I. HA Rep. 76 alt III nr. 381, 162-68; there is a transcription in NL SW 5, *Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*; later, this report was edited anonymously with the title "Ueber die bronzenen Arbeiten zu Stockholm und St. Petersburg," *Berlinisches Archiv der Zeit* 2 (1797), 213-23.

What matters here is Schadow's second, untitled report that is preserved in two versions in the *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, Berlin:

I. HA Rep. 76 alt III nr. 381, 178-84 is an autograph draft, 185-91 an emended transcription (with Schadow's own corrections and additions).

The document is inedited, but an inaccurate, extensively abridged and, at points, rephrased version based on the transcript NL SW 5, *Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* was edited by Julius Friedländer in 1864 (1890<sup>2</sup>). Friedländer, apparently confusing it with the first report (see above), gave it the partially misleading title "Die bronzenen Arbeiten in Stockholm und St. Petersburg betreffend" and wrongly identified it as a lecture held in late 1791. Friedländer's version is re-edited (in excerpt) by Hohl, *Frage des Kostüms* (n. 14), 68-70 and in extenso by Helmut Börsch-Supan (ed.), *Johann Gottfried Schadow, Kunst-Werke und Kunst-Ansichten 1849: Aufsätze und Briefe*, Berlin 1980.

A proper edition of the entire document is a *desideratum*. Here, an excerpt from the report's final version with the passage (p. 188), where Schadow reports the views of Abildgaard must suffice; the annotation highlights the main differences between this version and the edition of Friedländer:

Ich habe auf dieser meiner letzten Reise alle Künstler über diesen Gegenstand consultirt, die Kenntnisse und Talente besitzen. Einige fanden die Idee Friedrich den Grossen, in der römischen Tunica des Marc Aurels darzustellen vortrefflich, wie z. B. Desprez u. Marillier<sup>67</sup> in Stockholm. Velten<sup>68</sup> und Koslowsky in Petersburg, Sergel #####<sup>69</sup> Lafrenz<sup>70</sup> u. andere meinten hingegen, man könne sich unter diesem Hemde des Marc Aurels gar nicht jenen grossen preussischen König und Soldaten denken. Es wäre eben so als wenn man den Originalen Carl den 12ten

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67 In this second version Schadow has at this point first omitted and then, above the line, added the reference to Marillier (= Louis Adrien Masreliez (1748-1810)). Friedländer reads Marillier as Morillier.

68 J.M. Velten (or Felten), 1730-1801. Friedländer reads Velten as Vetter.

69 A deleted, barely legible reference, apparently to Marillier.

70 The Swedish painter N. Lafrensen (1737-1807).

damit bekleiden wollte; dies würde ganz mit der Idee die man von ihm hätte choquieren.<sup>71</sup>

Abilgaard Harsdorff<sup>72</sup> und Hoyer<sup>73</sup> in Coppenhagen waren der Meinung, man müsse keine Statue Equestre machen. Diese Meinung haben wir nun schon von vielen gehört, dass<sup>74</sup> wenn es aber einmal beschlossen wäre; so müsste man es ganz Portrait darstellen, in den Grenzen die die Regeln des Portraits vorschreiben, veredelt aber nicht fremd.

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## Appendix II

Excerpt from a letter dated 17th February 1792 from Tobias Sergel to Johann Gottfried Schadow

The letter is in Gottfried Schadow's papers in the *Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*, NL SW 188; cf. Lacher, Nachlass (n. 26), 44, no. 188. I quote the transcription by Ley, *Sergels Menschenbild* (n. 26), 253-54.

[...] Vous me fait une question sur le costume de la Statue. Comme artist je ne puis vous repondre que l'ancien habillement est preferable a ceu typique par la simplicité et noblesse, on ne doit pas même mettre en question le quelle est le plus beau. Vous penchez pour le moderne, mais c'est parler en Historien fidel, le plus grand nombre serra pour vous dans cette idée, car on veut reconnaître le Grand Roi meme a son chapeau et a ses bottes. Mais quelle difference pour le Stile, les formes des draperies en comparaison de l'uniforme. Je vais reconcilier l'avis de Masreliez et de Pilo<sup>75</sup> quand je pourrais sortir et je vous le marquerrais fidelement quelle sont leur manniere de Voir. Pour moi je ne vois que comme Artist. Le plus beaux costume est celui qui satisfait l'euille, dont les formes de la nature humaine sont la plus visible, sans être alterré par un marque depuis la tête aux pieds. Mais si vous recevez l'ordre de faire la Statue en uniforme, alors j'y cons[tat?]ant aussi, vous ferrez toujours une belle ouvrage par la verité du portrait, et vous serrez moins critiqué, car tout le monde reconnaiterra le Grand Frederick tel qu'il montà la garde. Du premier costume vous aurez diablement a combattre l'opignon publique, Vous serrez tracassé du commencement de l'ouvrage jusque a la fin parce que on ne reconnaiterra pas le Roi, sous l'habie des anciens. Vous aurez les Gens de Lettres contre vous qui crierrons nous ne sommes pas Romains, Nous sommes Prussiens, et telle etait l'uniforme du Herò et telle il faut le transmettre a la posterité.

Et ces personnes ont raison, car citot que je ne parle plus comme Artist je faux avouer que le costume du tems est le vrai, qui datte dans l'Histoir pour les ciecles a venir, comment etait habillé le Grand Frederick quand a la tête de son armé il a bravé ses Ennemis. Dans la Statue du Grand Homme tout detaille devient precieux et interessant. [...]

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71 This whole sentence is along with the change of paragraph discarded by Friedländer and subsequent editors.

72 C.F. Harsdorff (1735-99), the period's leading Danish architect. In some of the Berlin projects the statue was situated in a temple, which may explain Schadow's consultation of Harsdorff.

73 For the deleted reference to the miniature painter Cornelius Hoyer (1741-1804), see above § 21.

74 The sentence from "Diese Meinung" to "dass" is omitted by Friedländer and subsequent editors.

75 The Swedish artists Masreliez ([Appendix I](#), n. 2) and C.G. Pilo (1712/13-92). In his *Ausführliche Bericht*, Schadow only quotes the opinion of the former (cf. [Appendix I](#)).

### Appendix III

A letter dated 7th June 1800 from Johann Gottfried Schadow to Nicolai Abildgaard

The letter is in Nicolai Abildgaard's papers, Department of Manuscripts, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Ny kgl. Samling 2337 4°; the central passage on the question of classical versus modern dress is discussed by Kragelund, Abildgaard (n. 38), 291-92; 388-91; the letter is here presented in its entirety.

In the present rendering, the somewhat haphazard punctuation and many characteristic, if incorrect spellings and expressions have been retained. I am indebted to the Head of the Department, Ivan Boserup, for his generous help with deciphering and making sense of the letter.

A remettre a Monsieur Abilgaard, Conseiller de Justice, premier Peintre du Roi, et directeur de l'academie des beaux arts a Coppenhague.

Berlin le 7 Juin 1800.

C'est Monsieur le Comte Giordano Alborghetti de Milan<sup>76</sup> qui va vous remettre ceci. Je saisis cette occassion pour me rétablir dans votre Mémoire supposant que vous puissiez bien m'avoir oublié. Les Circonstances ont fait quitter la patrie au Comte, en attendant il roule pour voir le Monde et apprendre a connaitre les hommes les plus intéressants, c'est pourquoi je prends la liberté de l'adresser a Vous.

On m'a dit que dans la grande incendie du Chateau, vos tableaux ont brulé. si cela est c'est une grande perte, car selon moi, c'était ce que Coppenhague possédait de plus beau et cette perte est irréparable, car je doute qu'on puisse faire deux fois de tels tableaux.

On m'a raconté que les Artistes chez Vous ne sont pas du tout occupé, c'est fort triste, car sans Vous conter qui êtes sans doute le premier il y a chez Vous encore des gens capable de produire. Mais cette économie envers ceux qui produissent et cette profusion pour avoir des hommes qui détruisent ravage le Monde, et c'est par tout comme chez nous.

Il faut pourtant dire que nous aurons une grande exposition cette année, on a fixé des prix considérables pour des Tableaux d'Histoire et le Roi<sup>77</sup> qui s'ennuit à voir toujours des Grecs et des Romains veut de l'Histoire du pais

le même sentiment lui a fait commander une histoire lombarde pour le grand Opera.<sup>78</sup>

Je souhaiterais que nos peintres eussent vu vos tableaux de la grande Salle, qui prouvaient bien que l'on peut etre avec le costume des temps modernes au moins aussi intéressant, qu'avec l'ancien. Il est plus voisin et plus conforme a nos moeurs, mais il donne peut etre plus d'embarras a le traiter que l'autre.

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76 Probably identical with the Giordano Alborghetti (1775-1834), who in 1797 partook in the revolt of Bergamo against Venice and was active in the politics of the Cisalpine Republic (governed from Milan) until the fall of Napoleon; he figures as the dedicatee of an opera libretto *Berengario* by A. Peracchi with music by Carlo Melara from 1820; from the dedication it emerges that Alborghetti then directed the Teatro Riccardi (now Donizetti) in Bergamo.

77 For the Berlin Academy exhibition of 1800 (that opened on 15th September) King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia (1797-1840) had in 1799 encouraged artists to choose motifs from national history.

78 Johann Friedrich Reichardt's *Rosmonda* premiered at the Berlin Opera in February 1801.



Moi je suis justement à fai[re]<sup>79</sup> la Statue d'un vieux General prussien, le prince Leopold de Dessau du siecle passé, qui porte encore la moustache.<sup>80</sup>

J'ai aussi exécuté un grand groupe en marbre la Reine avec sa s[o]eur, mais des évènements sont cause qu'il reste encore caché.<sup>81</sup>

Je vous prie de me recommander a Msr Hoyer,<sup>82</sup> j'aurais bien voulu lui écrire, mais il m'est impossible manquant de temps, d'ailleurs je vous suppose toujours voisins.

la même raison m'empêche d'écrire à Msr Clemens vous voulez bien lui dire combien je le remercie pour le Portrait<sup>83</sup> du Comte de Bernstorff, peut être vous plairait'il d'y mener le Comte.<sup>84</sup>

Soyez assuré que c'est avec les sentiments de la plus haute estime que je me nomme le

votre

G. Schadow

Ceux qui se souviennent encore de moi je Vous prie de les saluer de ma part.

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79 Paper torn.

80 The monument to Leopold I of Anhalt-Dessau (1676-1747) from 1798-1800.

81 The marble version of Schadow's *Prinzessinnengruppe* had been finished for the Berlin Academy exhibition in 1797, but only in 1801 was it installed in a fairly inaccessible corner of the Berlin Schloss.

82 Schadow knew Cornelius Hoyer (n. 31) from the latter's stays in Berlin in 1787-90; there are greetings from Hoyer in a letter from one "Olsen" to Schadow of 1st May 1792 (= *Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*, NL SW 170).

83 Clemens had in 1796 engraved a portrait by Jens Juel of the Danish Prime Minister Count A.P. Bernstorff.

84 Schadow is referring to Count Alborghetti, suggesting that Abildgaard lets him visit Clemens' workshop.